

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGUI 00758 161521Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----161530Z 111356 /47

R 161200Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8541
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGUI 0758

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CT, CG
SUBJECT: CAE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE

1. FRENCH AMBASSADOR PICQUET HAS INFORMED ME OF A RECENT GOCAE REQUEST TO FRANCE FOR MILITARY AIRCRAFT. ACCORDING TO PICQUET, EMPEROR BOKASSA EARLIER THIS WEEK REQUESTED SIX HELICOPTERS, TWO TRANSALL CARGO PLANES, AND TWO NORD 262S. ALL OF HIS EQUIPMENT WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO ZAIRE AS A CAE CONTRIBUTION TO ITS WAR EFFORT. IN ADDITION BOKASSA TOLD PICQUET THAT HE WOULD SOON BE SENDING 1000 TROOPS TO ZAIRE AND ULTIMATELY HOPED TO SEND 5000. THEY WOULD BE TRANSPORTED TO ZAIRE IN THE TWO IMPERIAL CARAVELLES.

2. PICQUET DID NOT KNOW WHAT PARIS' RESPONSE WOULD BE TO THE ARMS REQUEST. THE CAE LACKED PILOTS AND MAINTENANCE CAPABILITY. HE THOUGHT IT UNLIKELY THAT FRANCE WOULD WANT TO SEND IN A MILITARY SUPPORT MISSION WHICH WOULD BE NECESSARY UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. PICQUET OBSERVED THAT THE FRENCH MILITARY HAD ALREADY BEEN THROWN OUT ONCE. PARIS WOULD NOT WANT TO RISK IT AGAIN, LEAVING EQUIPMENT TO BE FLOWN AND MAINTAINED BY THE RUSSIANS AFTERWARDS.

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3. COMMENT: BOKASSA'S PROPOSAL TO SEND SUCH AN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE TO ZAIRE IS LARGELY FANTASY. THE GOCAE NEITHER HAS THE TOOPS NOR THE SUPPORT CAPABILITY FOR AN OPERATION AS LARGE AS THAT DESCRIBED TO AMBASSADOR PICQUET. A TOKEN CONTRIBUTION OF MEN AND ARMS MAY INDEED BE MADE, BUT WE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO SEE VERY MUCH MORE.
QUAINTON

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